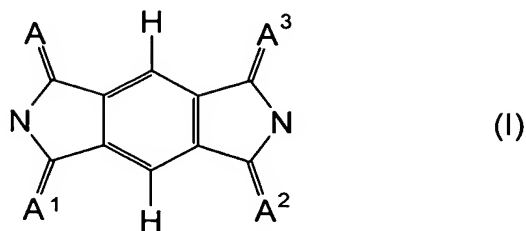


We claim:

- 1) A compound of the general formula (I)



wherein A represents the divalent radical of a cyclic compound of the general formula (II)



where B is an alicyclic or heterocyclic group, and

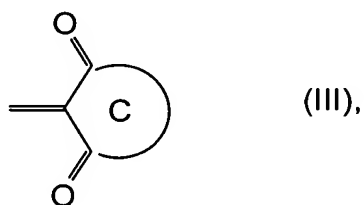
$A^1$ ,  $A^2$  and  $A^3$  are the same or different and have the meaning of A or represent  $=NR$ , where R is hydrogen, unsubstituted phenyl, phenyl substituted by 1, 2, 3 or 4 radicals selected from the group consisting of halogen,  $R^0$ ,  $OR^0$ ,  $SR^0$ ,  $NH_2$ ,  $NHR^0$ ,  $NR^0_2$ ,  $NO_2$ ,  $COOH$ ,  $COOR^0$ ,  $CONH_2$ ,  $CONHR^0$ ,  $CONR^0_2$ ,  $CN$ ,  $SO_3H$ ,  $SO_2(OR^0)$ ,  $SO_2R^0$ , or by a 5- to 7-membered heteroaromatic radical having 1, 2 or 3 heteroatoms from the group consisting of N, O and S; a 5- to 7-membered heteroaromatic radical having 1, 2 or 3 heteroatoms from the group consisting of N, O and S; and  $NH_2$ ,  $NHR^0$ ,  $NR^0_2$ ,  $NHCONH_2$  or  $NHCONHR^0$ , where  $R^0$  is  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkyl or  $C_6$ - $C_{24}$ -aryl.

- 2) The compound according to claim 1 wherein one of  $A^1$ ,  $A^2$  and  $A^3$  has the meaning of A.

- 3) The compound according to claim 1 wherein two of  $A^1$ ,  $A^2$  and  $A^3$  have the meaning of A.

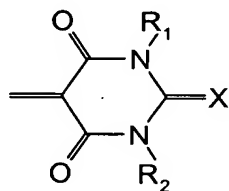
4) The compound according to claim 1 wherein  $A^1$ ,  $A^2$  and  $A^3$  have the meaning of A.

- 5) The compound according to at least one of claims 1 to 4 wherein A represents the divalent radical of a cyclic compound of the general formula (III)

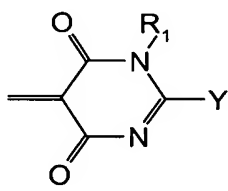


where C is an alicyclic or heterocyclic group.

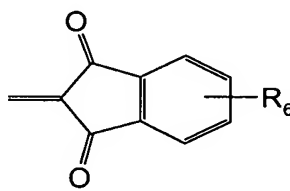
- 6) The compound according to at least one of claims 1 to 5 wherein A is a divalent radical of the formulae (a) to (g)



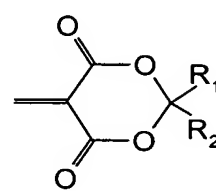
(a)



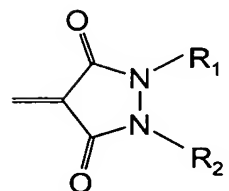
(b)



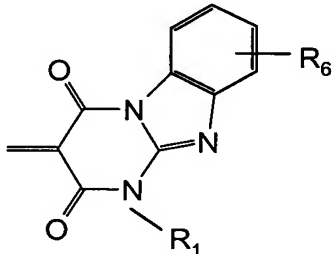
(c)



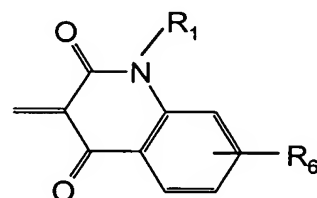
(d)



(e)



(f)



(g)

where  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  independently represent hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_{25}$ -alkyl,  $C_5$ - $C_{12}$ -cycloalkyl,  $C_6$ - $C_{24}$ -aryl,  $C_1$ - $C_{25}$ -alkyl- $(C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -aryl), a 5- to 7-membered

heteroaromatic radical having 1, 2 or 3 heteroatoms from the group consisting of N, O and S,  $-(CH_2)_n-COR_3$  or  $-(CH_2)_m-OR_4$ ,

where  $R_3$  is hydroxyl, amino or unsubstituted or singly or multiply hydroxyl- or amino-substituted  $C_1$ - $C_{25}$ -alkoxy,  $C_1$ - $C_{25}$ -alkylamino, di( $C_1$ - $C_{25}$ -alkyl)amino,  $C_6$ - $C_{24}$ -arylamino, di( $C_6$ - $C_{24}$ -aryl)amino,  $C_1$ - $C_{25}$ -alkyl-( $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -aryl)amino or  $C_2$ - $C_{24}$ -alkenyloxy;

$R_4$  is hydrogen or  $-CO-(C_1-C_{25}\text{-alkyl})$ , and

$n$  and  $m$  are independently an integer from 0 to 6,

and where a C-C unit in  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$  and  $R_4$  may also be replaced by an ether unit C-O-C;

X is =O, =S or =NR<sub>5</sub>, where  $R_5$  has the same meaning as  $R_1$  or  $R_2$ ;

Y is hydrogen,  $R_2$ ,  $OR_2$ ,  $SR_2$ , NHCN or  $NR_2R_5$ ;

and  $R_6$  is hydrogen, halogen, CN,  $R_2$ ,  $OR_2$ ,  $SR_2$ ,  $NR_2R_5$ ,  $NO_2$ ,  $SO_2(OR_2)$ ,  $SO_2R_2$ ,  $SO_2NR_2R_5$  or  $PO_2(OR_2)$ .

7) The compound according to claim 6 wherein

$R_1$  and  $R_2$  are hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkyl,  $C_5$ - $C_6$ -cycloalkyl,  $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -aryl, benzyl, pyridyl, pyrrol, thienyl, imidazolyl, oxazolyl, thiazolyl, pyrimidyl, hydroxycarbonyl- $C_0$ - $C_6$ -alkyl,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkoxycarbonyl- $C_0$ - $C_6$ -alkyl, aminocarbonyl- $C_0$ - $C_6$ -alkyl,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkylaminocarbonyl- $C_0$ - $C_6$ -alkyl,  $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -arylaminocarbonyl- $C_0$ - $C_6$ -alkyl, di( $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkyl)aminocarbonyl- $C_0$ - $C_6$ -alkyl,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkyl- $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -arylaminocarbonyl- $C_0$ - $C_6$ -alkyl or di( $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -aryl)aminocarbonyl- $C_0$ - $C_6$ -alkyl.

8) The compound according to claim 6 or 7 wherein

$R_3$  is hydroxyl,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkoxy,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkylamino, di( $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkyl)amino, benzylamino,  $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -arylamino, di( $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -aryl)amino or ( $C_2$ - $C_{18}$ )-alkenyloxy.

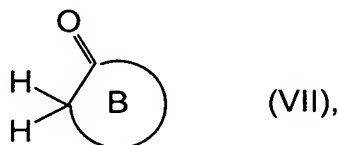
9) The compound according to one or more of claims 6 to 8 wherein

$R_6$  is hydrogen, Cl, Br,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkyl,  $C_5$ - $C_6$ -cycloalkyl, benzyl,  $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -aryl, pyridyl, pyrrol, thienyl, imidazolyl, oxazolyl, thiazolyl, pyrimidyl,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkoxy,  $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -aryloxy,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkylthio,  $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -arylthio,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkylamino,  $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -arylamino, di( $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkyl)amino,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkyl- $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -arylamino, di( $C_6$ - $C_{10}$ -aryl)amino,  $SO_3H$ ,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkoxysulfonyl,  $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkylsulfonyl or di( $C_1$ - $C_{18}$ -alkyl)aminosulfonyl.

10) A process for preparing a compound according to at least one of claims 1 to 9, which comprises reacting 1,2,4,5-tetracyanobenzene with at least 2 equivalents of ammonia and/or alkoxides  $\text{MOR}_7$ ,

5 where M is sodium or potassium,  $\text{R}_7$  is  $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_{18}$ -alkyl or  $-(\text{CH}_2)_m\text{-OH}$  and m is an integer from 1 to 6, and a C-C unit may also be replaced by an ether unit C-O-C, in a solvent or solvent mixture under basic to neutral conditions at a temperature in the range from  $-20$  to  $120^\circ\text{C}$  to form tetra-, tri-, di- or monoimino-substituted benzodipyrroles,

10 which are subsequently, in a solvent or solvent mixture under neutral to acidic conditions, reacted with at least 1 equivalent of a cyclic compound of the formula (VII)



15 and if appropriate not more than 3 equivalents of  $\text{H}_2\text{NR}$ .

11) The use of a compound according to at least one of claims 1 to 9 for dyeing or pigmenting organic or inorganic, high or low molecular weight materials.

20 12) The use according to claim 11 as colorants for electrophotographic toners and developers, for color filters, for electronic inks and also in optical layers for optical data storage.

25 13) A composition comprising an organic or inorganic, high or low molecular weight material and at least one of the compounds defined in one or more of claims 1 to 9 in an amount from 0.005% to 70% by weight, based on the organic or inorganic material.